

D. Graham, Sheila  
Soc. 4.01.4 The Mind  
of An Assassin

## HOLLYWOOD



# Trotsky Assassin Is Subject of Film

By SHEILAH GRAHAM

LONDON — The man who killed Leon Trotsky will tell the story to Josef Shafstel, an American film and television producer who has settled in England.

"He has never talked before," said Joe, a rotund, happy-looking man who told me has all the finance he needs for his current schedule of eight films to be made all over the world.

"When he was arrested in Mexico and sentenced to 20 years and a day—they released him two weeks before that—he wouldn't talk; he didn't give his name of his nationality. When he left prison, he changed his name. He lives in Prague, he is married and has two children, and works as an assistant photographer."

Shafstel is making a film on the assassination of Trotsky, who was banished from Russia by Stalin in 1929. After roaming the world, he finally found a haven in Mexico in 1937. He was murdered there in August of 1940 by the man who will now tell all, in the interests of Shafstel's film. And for a fee, although the money is not as important as getting the facts straight. It will make an interesting film and book.

I had asked Shafstel to tea, not realizing the scoop he had for me. I had been more interested in the films he was planning as an independent when so many of the majors have closed their studios until more money is available.

Shafstel made the first batch of "The Untouchables" TV shows, which, he told me, have made Robert Stack a millionaire twice and a half over. He also produced "The Biggest Bundle of Them All," which starred Raquel Welch, and she seems to have been the biggest headache of them all.

"Raquel thought she was a big movie star," said Joe. "She had to have a car bigger than anyone else's. When she was 40 minutes late with 200 extras waiting, I yelled at her and the entire Italian crew ap-

plauded. Raquel was new and probably insecure."

I asked Joe whether he thought Raquel would be good as Myra Breckinridge in the film for 20th Century-Fox. He thought so. He summed up her personality as "masculine."

There are some women who are strong and powerful the way men are supposed to be. Raquel has always been determined and has always known where she was at. This attitude can make you lose some femininity.

Now to Shafstel's schedule. "We've just released 'The Last Grenade'—it was 'Grigsby'—with Stanley Baker, Alex Cord and Richard Attenborough. We have finished 'Ask Agamnon,' with Judy Geeson and Martin Potter. We are now filming 'Say Hello to Yesterday,' with Jean Simmons and Leonard Whiting, who was Romeo in Zeffirelli's picture. On April 15 we start 'The Statue' with David Niven and Robert Vaughn.

"The Trotsky film, 'The Mind of an Assassin,' will be made in Mexico. Ian Hunter is in Prague talking to the man who killed him."

"Another film on the schedule is 'Masada.' This will be the biggest project of my life. Masada is the hill where Herod built his temple. When part of it was excavated three years ago, Gen. Yadin revealed that the story written by Josephus 2000 years ago, was corroborated. Thirty-five years before the fall of Jericho, a group of zealots went to Masada in a last stand against the Romans. It took 10 Roman legions to conquer the 960 zealots, who committed suicide rather than surrender.

"We will make this picture in Israel with the cooperation of the Israeli government. Even today, every officer in the Israeli air force takes the oath to serve at Masada. It will be an expensive picture, in the \$3-\$4 million class."

Shafstel has been in the film